

Meanwhile, during this whole period, I was working on a project I had been given by Harry Rowen in late February or early March of 1961, to draft the Department of Defense proposal for a new "basic national security policy" (BNSP). President Eisenhower had, I believe, initiated this series of annual statements, formulated and debated at the NSC level, as the statement by civilian authority of the objectives and guidelines to serve each year as the basis for all war planning within the Department of Defense.

Under Eisenhower each BNSP had embodied the "New Look" and "Massive Retaliation" doctrines of Dulles and Radford, emphasizing "main but not sole reliance" upon nuclear weapons as opposed to non-nuclear. In fact, this emphasis was expressed in a trend toward describing nuclear weapons as "conventional." Since for some time John Kennedy, as a Senator, had been associated with a critique of Massive Retaliation similar to that of General Taylor and others, and an espousal of what Taylor called the "strategy of flexible response," it was understood that a significant change in the policy doctrine of war planning was in order, and it was assumed that this should take the form of a radically revised "basic national security policy."

Already in February Bill Kaufmann of RAND had briefed the Secretary of Defense on some proposals within the Air Staff aimed at moving away from what Herman Kahn labeled a "spasm" concept of general war (or as Kahn put it more privately, a "war-gasm") toward a capability for sustained and controlled "war fighting" even in general war, focused on military targets. Kaufman had been involved

with the Air Staff planners interested in this concept in preparing their briefings throughout 1960, with much help from RAND. It would have been natural, then, for Harry to assign Kaufmann - who was also working as an ISA consultant in Washington at this time - to draft the general war section of the new BNSP; but somewhat to my surprise, Rowan asked me to draft that section, and instead assigned Kaufmann the task of drafting a limited war section. I knew that my own views as to how policy should be written and how strategy and capabilities should change were closer to Rowen's than Kaufmann's were, and I presumed that that was why I was given the job rather than Kaufmann. This encouraged me to undertake the drafting as a process of refining and making concrete my own views as precisely as possible, with the expectation that the end result would probably be acceptable to Rowen. This proved to be the case, though in the course of this I sought a great deal of detailed input from Kaufmann's and other RAND writings, from RAND alumni like Alain Enthoven, Fred Hoffman, Frank Trinkl, Dave McGarvey, Malcolm Hoag, and others then serving as officials or consultants in the Department of Defense, and from the Air Staff officers with whom I'd been working over the past two years.

The concept of "war fighting" or "damage limiting" favored by some sections of the Air Staff involved prolonged and controlled "counterforce attacks" upon a military target system in the Soviet Union and the satellites, including precise attacks against hardened missile sites and command control centers. This concept called for increased numbers of high performance bombers, capable of penetrating Russian defenses - either flying underneath the radar or higher than the range of air defense missiles - to deliver high payloads more precisely than missiles could do; thus it gave support to the Air Force

proposals for the B-70 bomber program (now the B-1) a consequence that doubtless was not unrelated to the Air Force enthusiasm for the approach. It also implied a crash effort to improve the accuracy of missiles (an objective then thought to disfavour the Navy's mobile missile, the Polaris, in favour of land-based missiles controlled by the Air Force) and meanwhile to increase numbers of missiles to make up for their inaccuracy against small and hardened military targets.

The merits of the argument, on the basis of the best available calculations, as to the extent that damage either to the target area or to the United States could be limited by such an approach, did not impress me. It was obvious, then as now, that nothing, could be relied on very far to limit damage to less than catastrophic levels once the process of general nuclear war was underway. Thus, there was an incalculably vast premium for all nuclear powers on deterring, preventing and avoiding a general nuclear war under any circumstances. But if - given the inventories of weapons already existing, such a war should nevertheless commence, what seemed to offer relatively more promise than the Air Force's plans for "damage limiting by controlled counterforce attacks" was a strategy aimed at terminating the war as quickly as possible, before all weapons on both sides should have been employed, and particularly, before any, many, or all had been employed against urban targets. This meant both deterring, if possible, an opponent from launching strikes against U.S. and allied cities, and inducing the opponent's command authority to stop operations short of expending all his weapons.

Both of these objectives called for three characteristics in our own planning and operations: avoiding enemy cities in our own initial strikes - instead of removing, with their proposed or actual destruction, all restraint on enemy planning or targeting; maintaining protected

and controlled U.S. reserve forces under virtually all circumstances, to preserve a threat capability in order to terminate the war; and preserving on both sides a command and control capability capable of controlling reserve forces and terminating operations. Neither I nor Harry Rowen had at that time any illusions that any such planned measures had any high likelihood of achieving the desired affects either on enemy planning or on the course of hostilities; although the likelihood of having some desirable effect seemed distinctly greater than with the proposals focused exclusively on counter-force tactics, let alone the current planning and posture, which did not provide for either terminating the war or limiting damage in any other foreseeable way. However, planning toward the three characteristics above did have a number of desirable effects on our own posture quite apart from whatever effects they might or might not have on the actual course of a general war (though such planning was rationally defensible in the latter narrow context). First, it implied that there were some choices to be made by the highest surviving U.S. authority even after general war hostilities had begun: namely, for example, what threats to make, what terms to set for the termination of hostilities, the use of reserve forces and the actual decision to terminate operations. Given the nature and urgency of such decisions, it was obviously desirable that the President himself, or at least someone having his full confidence, be physically capable of making such decisions after general war had begun, and that meant preserving him physically and preserving a reliable communications capability.

Moreover, given that the President or his representative would have to contemplate such choices during the war, there came to be a rationale for the President to inform himself and his civilian

advisors before the war of the detailed nature of proposed war planning. Third, and perhaps most important, once it was admitted that presidential capability to command should be preserved during the war, and once physical measures had been taken to achieve this with high reliability, there could no longer be strong military objections, on the basis of physical reliability, against implementing physical controls over nuclear weapons which would make it impossible, or at least greatly reduce the likelihood, that lower commanders could mistakenly or insubordinately initiate the use of nuclear weapons on their own.

Thus, the strategy of limiting damage by effecting the conduct of enemy operations and by terminating the war, and of doing this by threatening the use of reserves against as-yet-unhit enemy targets, not only required plans and preparations to preserve both U.S. reserves and crucial enemy targets throughout the early stages of nuclear war, along with presidential command authority and communications, but it justified, well before hostilities, presidential involvement in the war-planning process and physical safeguards against accident and unauthorized action. Finally, by focusing critical attention upon the current plans for the prompt destruction of urban targets under all circumstances of general war, such an approach opened up the possibility of a strategic and moral critique of such plans, currently regarded as beyond question because essential to deterrence.

Such an approach called for so drastic a change in both plans and preparations from the posture that had developed since 1953, and especially since 1956, that it seemed clear that the basic national security policy should be drafted in considerable concrete detail, rather than being the brief and vague document which the

military had come to expect in the years when it simply reaffirmed the existing New Look doctrine. Moreover, although in principal the BNSP merely defined national policy rather than arguing it, some of these notions had become so unfamiliar in strategic dialogue that it seemed desirable to smuggle in as much rationale as possible, both to undermine resistance and to introduce the planners to considerations that had not recently appeared in military writing.

On April 7, 1961 - which happened to be my birthday - I finished the first draft of a BNSP and sometime afterward had a finished product. This took the form of a 12-page discussion of goals, contingencies and requirements, intended to make both the desired changes and the reasoning for them fully explicit to the military planners working on the JSCP and subordinate plans. Moreover, I drafted an earlier section of objectives specifying national objectives in "central war." In order to avoid the previous ambiguity of the meaning of "general war," the distinction was used in this draft between "local war" and "central war," the latter defined as: "War involving deliberate nuclear attacks, instituted by government authority, upon the homelands of one or both of the two major powers, the United States and the Soviet Union." Local war was defined as "any other armed conflict."

Both the objectives and the draft plan itself, which follow below, would probably appear totally commonsensical to any reader unfamiliar with the history of strategic disputes and with earlier planning or current posture; and so they were, except for the fact that almost every sentence constituted a radical challenge to and departure from some fundamental characteristic of the then-existing plans and preparations. Even a high civilian planner in the Defense Department - having been kept unfamiliar with the details of these plans and preparations by military bureaucratic secrecy - could have

been expected to wonder why it was necessary to specify such "obvious" considerations in such explicit detail. Why bother, for example, in the highest-level policy document, to mention the need for maintaining reserve forces? The answer, implausible, was that the highest-level war plans for the United States at that time called for the immediate expenditure of all weapons as soon as they could be made operationally ready, under all circumstances of initiation of general war: In other words, these plans, and all supporting training and preparation, not only failed to provide for the maintenance and possible subsequent commitment of any tactical or strategic reserves - the core consideration in classical military planning - but they positively required that there should be no meaningful reserves.

Thus, in order to explain to the civilian officials who would be first considering this draft why the discussion of such length was required, as well as to justify for them the specific contents - knowing that the attack from the military bureaucracy was likely to focus, disingenuously, upon the details and the "unnecessary" length of the document rather than upon specific contents - I accompanied the draft with two other informal documents of my own; called "Relation of Current Plans and Posture to Proposed Requirements" and "Short-term changes necessary to implement the plan," to make quite clear the discrepancies between this plan and the current posture and the need for the changes.

RELATION OF CURRENT PLANS AND POSTURE TO PROPOSED REQUIREMENTS

1. Survival and endurance.

(a) The current force cannot survive in major strength under well-coordinated enemy attack without quick reaction to tactical warning which is ambiguous and unreliable. Only the small Polaris force can endure under prolonged attack, and no current protected capability exists to control it. (Airborne alert is a current potential, and preparation could extend the interval during which planes in the air on positive control could await commitment.)

(b) No current strategic plans provide for a strategic reserve under any circumstances of central war; all ready vehicles, including all Polaris missiles, are committed to attack pre-planned targets as soon as possible.

2. Strict positive control.

(a) There are currently no realistic procedures for the authorization of a strategic response by high national authority in the event of a surprise attack destroying Washington. All duly constituted officials authorized to assume succession as Commander-in-Chief are normally located in Washington. Even a moderate attack on the U.S. command and control system today would eliminate, with high confidence, the possibility of a U.S. authorized or even coordinated response.

(b) In the absence of realistic plans or convincing assurance that authorization for an appropriate response will be forthcoming, there is widespread acceptance of the notion that unauthorized "initiative" will be necessary, either at high military levels of command (which are almost as vulnerable as Washington) or at low. Both this attitude itself, and the reluctance to institute reliable safeguards against unauthorized action which follows from it, increase the possibility of unauthorized "initiative" in a time of crisis, under the stress of ambiguous indications and an outage of communications with higher command.

(c) Although there are physical safeguards against accident, there are almost none against unauthorized action, either in connection with individual vehicles or in command post operations. Such safeguards are technically possible; in principle, they take the form of a combination lock on weapons, requiring a code sent by higher authority to unsafe or release the weapon.

(d) Such safeguards are particularly important in connection with weapons under dual control with an Ally; current "protection", furnished by the Ally itself, serves to guard against "third party" action but furnishes minimum inhibition against unilateral action by Allied forces themselves.

(e) "Super-safing" both against accident and unauthorized action is required for weapons on high alert or mobile. Currently, weapons on high alert with Allied forces, nominally under dual control, not only lack such special precautions but are atypically accident-prone, not having been designed for such operation.

(f) It would be unacceptable to lower the risk of accident at the cost of markedly raising the risk of deliberate enemy attack; solutions to the problems of accident and unauthorized action should not afford an enemy the opportunity to paralyze U.S. response totally by attack on the command and control system. Although the design of explicit procedures for authorization under all circumstances raises complicated issues, such procedures could be both safer and more reliable than current tacit, ambiguous and uncontrolled understandings.

3. Information

(a) Current plans (prior to the President's Budget Message) do not call for bomb alarm read-outs at offensive force bases or subordinate command posts. Many units, particularly outside the ZI, might have outage of communications as their only immediate indication of enemy attack, and that would be highly ambiguous.

(b) The current design of the bomb alarm system, including means of transmission of signals, is such that a small number of bombs might put it out of operation. Thus, even though it had indicated that an attack involving "at least," say, four

bombs had taken place, it would not be able to indicate even grossly the actual size of the attack, its nature (e.g., whether or not cities were being hit on a large scale), or its gross effects on U.S. bases; nor could it discriminate reliably between a large-scale, coordinated attack and an attack involving a few weapons, possibly as a result of unauthorized action or nth country action.

(c) Almost all information, status-reporting, intelligence, sensor and reconnaissance systems are either totally unprotected or vulnerable in vital links; inputs of data to surviving decision-makers would drop almost to zero at the outset of a major attack.

(d) The bomb alarm system as currently planned does not link different levels in the chain of command. No other highly reliable means of determining the status of higher command are currently provided; reliance is upon outage of communications, which is highly ambiguous.

4. Force flexibility.

(a) Current design of Minuteman missiles makes it impossible to fire fewer than 50 at a time.

(b) Current design of Minuteman missiles requires procedures which may take six hours to change the target of a missile from the one preset. If commitment within a few minutes or hours is required, the currently planned Minuteman force could be used only in blocs of 50 against preplanned targets.

(c) Current plans do not include options for covering alternative target systems; in the absence of such plans, rapid re-targeting of large numbers of bombers is almost impossible, even before attack. No protected facilities, or planning aids for rapid replanning, would allow such retargeting after attack.

(d) The almost total current lack of preparation and capability for post-attack reconnaissance, would severely limit the possibility, after initial attacks, of continued countermilitary action, even against soft, fixed missiles relying only on concealment for protection.

5. Counter military capability

(a) Lacking flexibility and the capability for rapid replanning just prior to or during attack, current counter military forces would have little ability to exploit actual inefficiencies or vulnerabilities in Soviet posture or tactics; in any case, they lack the protected information sources necessary to recognize such Soviet departures from conservative U.S. expectations.

(b) Even if U.S. counter military action were able markedly to reduce the weight of attack that the Soviets could launch against the U.S., other aspects of U.S. posture combine to ensure that even a small Soviet attack would be maximally potent;

1) The basing of U.S. bombers, missiles, carriers and Polaris submarines near major U.S. or Allied cities currently makes those cities "bonus" targets in a Soviet attack on U.S. forces. But the current plans for siting new missiles near or upwind of U.S. cities gratuitously adds to this problem. They decrease the force requirements by a deliberate enemy attack against both forces and U.S. population, and they increase the inadvertent destruction from an attack on U.S. forces alone.

2) Anti-bomber defenses current operate in highly vulnerable, centralized modes, and the defensive vehicles themselves are unprotected. The possible effectiveness of anti-missile defenses is still under question.

3) The current lack of adequate fallout protection in the U.S. means that even a very small attack--a large unauthorized Soviet action, an attack by a minor power, an aborted attack or one heavily attrited by U.S. counter military action--would cause very heavy U.S. casualties, even if the attack hit no major U.S. cities directly. Thus, measures proposed to reduce the likelihood of a large enemy attack, and especially a large attack against cities, could not lower U.S. casualties below an extremely large figure even under a relatively small attack.

6. Contingency planning.

(a) Current "alternative options" provide only for differing force size and coordination of attack upon a single, given

target system, corresponding to different intervals of warning. Even in the attack on this system, they do not provide for different patterns of U.S. base destruction in a surprise attack. They do not allow attack of alternative target systems, or deliberate postponement of attack on any part of the given target system.

(b) No current option provides for the avoidance or postponement of attack on major Soviet or Communist Chinese cities.

(c) No current option provides for minimizing non-military casualties in the U.S.S.R. or Communist China subject to the military requirements of strictly counterforce operations.

(d) No current option provides for the maintenance of ready forces (e.g., Polaris submarines) in strategic reserve.

(e) No current option provides for the exclusion of primary governmental control centers, or primary military control centers, from initial attack.

(f) No current option covers war with the Soviet Union alone, excluding or postponing attacks upon Communist China.

(g) The exclusion of one or more satellite nations from planned attacks would require procedures taking several hours to complete.

(h) Neither joint strategic plans, nor supporting plans, have normally been submitted to the President or to the Secretary of Defense for their inspection, review or approval, although nominally all directives to the unified and specified commanders are issued by authority and direction of the Secretary of Defense or the Commander-in-Chief.

7. Protected command

(a) See 2(a)

(b) A single bomb on Washington would seriously degrade military command capability, but it would virtually eliminate all constituted political authority and all experienced, fully informed political leadership. Such an explosion might be the result of accident, unauthorized action, nth country action, or badly executed or abortive enemy attack: all events putting the utmost premium on information, experience and authority both political and military.

(c) The possibility of precluding authorization of a response, and thereby possibly paralyzing or at least delaying a coordinated U.S. response, by hitting a few soft or semi-soft command posts in the U.S. makes those centers overwhelmingly attractive targets. If the cost of destroying U.S. primary command centers could be sharply raised, and the rewards to hitting them sharply lowered or even made negative (by assuring a maximal retaliatory response), the enemy would be forced, at the least, to reconsider the desirability of attacking them.

(d) Before 1961, plans for protection of primary leadership depended almost entirely on warning and relocation; yet the alternate relocation sites offer highly inadequate protection. There was, in effect, "no place to hide," even with warning. (Current plans for mobile sites should improve this situation).

8. Wartime control

(a) See 6a-g

(b) Once an authenticated "Execute" order has been received by SAC forces; SAC operational doctrine--and their lack of an authentication code for a "Stop" order--prevents them from being stopped by any authority.

(c) Since all current strategic options destroy all major Sino-Soviet urban-industrial centers and governmental/military control centers, and none maintains a strategic reserve, U.S. national

SOME POSSIBILITIES FOR SHORT-RUN IMPROVEMENTS IN CURRENT POSTURE/PLANNING

1. As Polaris submarines are added to the force, they become available as a potential strategic reserve of long endurance. Airborne alert, if directed, would increase the force capable of surviving no-warning attack; short-term measures could increase the flexibility of this force, including:
 - (a) planning and briefing for alternative target systems;
 - (b) communications improvements and other preparations to extend the interval during which planes in the air could await commitment or could be retargeted or recalled.
2. Currently-planned mobile, back-up command centers can greatly improve the possibility of an authorized response under all circumstances of enemy attack. At the least, they should very sharply reduce enemy hope or confidence of paralyzing U. S. response by attacks on primary command centers. They even furnish some low-confidence "protection" to primary command centers by lessening or eliminating enemy incentives for hitting primary command. Highly reliable means of communication of "execute" messages to all forces are also relatively short-term possibilities.
3. Given the planned improvement above, immediate measures might be taken throughout all commands to emphasize that there will be no reliance upon unauthorized "initiative" under any circumstances. Physical safeguards against unauthorized action -- such as a "lock" device on weapons, if that proves

feasible and desirable -- and safeguarded command post procedures governing the authentication and issuance of "execute" messages could be implemented. Weapons inherently difficult to safeguard from accident or unauthorized action while on high alert status could be immediately removed from such status.

4. Planned bomb-alarm readouts at bases and command posts will give further assurance to an enemy that he cannot paralyze U. S. response.

System design could be altered to provide more reliable indication of base status and of the size and pattern of enemy attack (e.g., whether some or all major cities are being avoided), if it proves feasible to protect the system against larger attack than is now planned. The bomb-alarm system could be extended world-wide. This system alone could provide sufficient information, though in a gross form, for some significant choices by surviving commanders, e.g., in mobile command posts (although it would be highly desirable to have broader, more reliable and more discriminating information as well).

5. Plans for Minuteman missile system design could be changed to allow selective firing of individual missiles, and varying degrees of flexibility in retargeting individual missiles. The time interval during which commitment could be delayed or retargeting accomplished (currently, six hours from attack on system) could be extended.

6. Current plans for siting new missiles near or upwind of major cities could be altered.

7. Alternative options could be provided covering significantly different target systems, use of reserves, and timing of attack. For certain of these,

different sub-options could be planned corresponding to different patterns of base-destruction resulting from no-warning or low-warning enemy attack.

8. Specifically, options might provide for the exclusion of Communist China, or of individual Satellite nations, from attack. Options might provide for the exclusion of urban-industrial centers, or governmental control centers from direct attack, and for the minimization of non-military casualties from remaining attacks. Sub-options might allow for the exclusion of primary military controls, to the extent that this is compatible with attack upon Soviet bases and sites.

9. Provision could be made for maintaining experienced political authorities and staff outside of Washington at all times, with adequate communications and information inputs. At the least, this could minimize the loss of immediate political direction in the event of a single bomb or small attack involving Washington.

10. Preparations could be made to reduce sharply the vulnerability of the highest national authorities, including the President, in the event of warning, by transfer to mobile or concealed sites.

11. Preparations could be made increasing the possibility of swift, reliable communications with Allied and enemy leaders prior to and during attack.

12. SAC operational doctrine and procedures could be modified to permit halting further attacks at any time that communications permit.

This list is not at all exhaustive, but includes changes that do not seem to involve relatively large amounts of both time and money; most of them involve changes in planning or procedures for operation of capabilities already existing or planned. These measures alone would promise to reduce the possibility of accident or unauthorized action, improve deterrence of attack (by assuring effective response) and deterrence of attack on command centers, and give surviving leadership increased freedom of action, including the option to minimize enemy and Allied damage consistent with the achievement of U. S. national objectives, and to use threats of reserve forces against unhit targets to discourage the enemy from attacking U. S. cities or from continuing the war. They do not happen to imply increases in force size; nor do the improvements achieved depend on any superiority in force size to Soviet forces.

Other measures might be highly worthwhile, but have not been included in this list because they might be somewhat more controversial, more expensive or more time-consuming; they are not essential to the improvements cited in the achievement of U. S. objectives. Some of these measures would include adequate fallout protection (even minimal fallout protection could reduce greatly the casualties from a small or counter-military attack), improved post-attack reconnaissance and information capabilities, and post-attack command capabilities greatly superior to the mobile posts mentioned. Though major improvements are possible without these measures, they would contribute greatly to the U. S. national objectives listed.

Still other capabilities, still more expensive, longer-run, or uncertain in their promise, would be needed if more ambitious U. S. military objectives

were adopted. These might include a large, protected bomber force for armed reconnaissance; large numbers of protected, large-yield, high accuracy missiles; a large anti-ICBM program, if feasible; and a massive civil defense program. Whether or not these measures would be desirable on various grounds, they do not appear required to achieve the U. S. national objectives listed (which focus, with respect to the military outcome of hostilities, on preventing enemy superiority, with high assurance under all conditions). They are not implicit in the postural requirements described; and they may well be undesirable, on the basis of cost and uncertainty or in terms of their possible effects on Soviet expectations, the arms race, and the possibility of reaching arms agreements.